

Teaching Unit 7: Planning with people: a stakeholder simulation for resilient cities

Introduction

Key Question(s) / Target

- Who has the right to shape the city, and how are these rights negotiated in practice?
- What does a socially resilient city look like from multiple stakeholder perspectives?
- How can urban planning processes better integrate diverse voices, including those often marginalized?
- What strategies help transform conflict into collaboration in planning for sustainable cities?

Overview:

This interactive lecture invites students to explore the real-world complexities of participatory urban planning and social resilience through a structured stakeholder simulation. Based on diverse case studies from European cities, the session challenges participants to engage with urgent urban questions: Who has the right to shape the city? How can conflicting interests be negotiated? What makes a city resilient and inclusive?

Participants are assigned stakeholder roles such as municipal planners, community activists, residents, NGOs, cultural workers, or private developers and work within a real conflict scenario drawn from a specific case. Through facilitated negotiation, they must present their perspectives, identify common ground, and work together to co-create solutions.

Learning Objectives / Contents

The lecture aims to develop students' skills in:

- Critical thinking and systems analysis
- Empathy and perspective-taking
- Negotiation and collaborative problem-solving
- Applying theory to practice using real-life planning cases

Teaching Methods

The teaching method blends short inputs with experiential learning. A brief case introduction is followed by group preparation, a moderated role-play session, and a reflective debrief. The adaptable structure enables the use of different case studies, depending on the context, audience, or course theme.

This method not only deepens understanding of social resilience and participatory governance, but also fosters interdisciplinary dialogue, cultural awareness, and democratic values key competencies for future professionals shaping more just and sustainable cities.



Scenario

Information for the teacher

Format: Interactive lecture and role-play simulation

Duration: 90 minutes

Target audience: 1st or 2nd cycle students and professional learners in urban planning, architecture, civil engineering, social sciences, sustainability, and public policy.

Role play is an experiential learning method that immerses participants in simulated real-life situations by assigning them specific roles, perspectives, and responsibilities. In the context of higher education, it enables learners to actively explore complex social, political, or spatial dynamics by “becoming” stakeholders in a scenario, such as policymakers, citizens, developers, or activists and engaging in dialogue, negotiation, and decision-making. This method fosters empathy, critical thinking, and collaborative problem-solving by allowing students to understand multiple viewpoints, navigate conflicts, and grapple with uncertainty. Role play is particularly effective in teaching subjects like urban planning, governance, and sustainability, where diverse interests must be balanced and abstract theories can be tested through practical, participatory engagement.

Session overview

Time	Segment	Activities
0–15 min	Introduction	Welcome, objectives, warm-up: “What does a resilient city mean to you?” Divide participants into groups of five. Present background of the selected case study; briefly explain 5 stakeholder roles.
15–30 min	Role preparation	Assign or let participants to choose roles; distribute stakeholder briefs and worksheets; silent reading and strategy preparation.
30–60 min	Role play simulation	Group discussions with opening statements (1 min per role); negotiation; attempt to reach a compromise or collective solution.
60–80 min	Debrief	All groups share their insights; reflection guided by suggested questions below.
80–90 min	Wrap-up	Teacher’s reflection on similarities/differences; key takeaways; link to course themes.

Materials needed

For this seminar Case studies – Short summary reports prepared in UPRUN project were used. Case studies are from different countries and different initiatives.

We have prepared material for three case studies, so you can select the most appropriate for you. Each set of material consists of:

- Case description
- Role: Initiator
- Role: Governmental Body
- Role: Beneficiary
- Role: Academic
- Role: EU Policy Maker

For the seminar you will need:

- Printouts of Case description and Role briefs or digital access via university system (see below for case options).
- Participant worksheets (Appendix 1)
- Separate table for each group of five participants

Make sure to read the selected case study so you can answer students' doubts.

General stakeholder roles

- Initiator
- Governmental body
- Beneficiary
- Academic or consultant
- EU Policy maker

For this seminar, material for three case studies is prepared:

- A New Street in Šančiai, Kaunas: Conflict, Community, and Civic Resilience
- Velika Hoča: Post-Conflict Recovery, Heritage Revitalization, and Community Resilience
- Public Space, Private Interests: Participatory Planning in Prague–Zbraslav

We recommend choosing one case study for all students.

Facilitation tips

- Stay neutral and avoid influencing stakeholder negotiations.
- Emphasise the purpose of the game and encourage creative role-playing.
- Monitor time and announce remaining time at 10-minute intervals.
- Limit monologues and support balanced participation.
- During preparation, answer questions privately to maintain role confidentiality.



- Debrief with emotional check-ins: Who felt empowered? Who felt excluded?

Introduction (15 min.)

- Introduce the objectives of the lesson and the idea behind the role-game to all the participants.
- Give the warm-up question: “What does a resilient city mean to you?”
- Divide participants into groups of five people.
- Present the background of the selected case study.
- Briefly explain the 5 roles.

Role preparation (15 min.)

- Assign roles or ask whether anyone in each group wants to play a specific role.
- If there is an odd number of players, you can allow one role to be played by two different people.
- Distribute stakeholder briefs and worksheets.
- Silent reading and preparation of the negotiation strategy.

Role play simulation (30 min.)

- Each group is discussing within the group members.
- Opening statements (1 min/role).
- Facilitated negotiation round - discussion, alliances, conflict.
- Attempt to reach a decision or compromise.

Debrief (20 min.)

Debriefing sessions start after the role simulation. All groups are presenting their insights from the role-play.

The teacher could give the following reflective questions:

- Which group reached an agreement? Were players satisfied?
- What was the key element that led to an agreement?
- Which stakeholder had the strongest position and why?
- What worked? What failed?
- What were the toughest trade-offs?
- Did you feel heard?
- What might happen in a real city?
- How could citizen participation be strengthened?

Wrap-up (10 min.)

Teacher's reflection on students' work:

- Similarities, differences between the groups' work.
- Key takeaways



- Connect to broader course themes

Appendix 1.

Participant worksheet template (1 page per person)

Role: _____

Your main goals / values:

-
-
-

Top 3 concerns or risks:

-
-
-

Who might support or oppose you? Why?

Proposed solution or position:

Where are you willing to compromise?

Final outcome (if agreed):

Notes:



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